



Saving TEXAS HISTORY

The Texas General Land Office
Archives and Records Newsletter
Jerry Patterson, Commissioner
Vol. 9 Number 3 * Fall 2012

War Comes to the Land Office, 1861 – 1865



The Texas General Land Office Building was completed in 1857, and is currently in use as the Capitol Visitors Center.

“I believe that war, war, war should be our all absorbing business until we have conquered our independence,” retiring Gov. Francis R. Lubbock admonished Texans in November 1863. By that time, the Lone Star State had been fighting for over two and one-half years. For every Texan, the effects of war were felt each day, and there was no institution that was not impacted—including the Texas General Land Office. The work performed by its all-male staff was very different from antebellum times. By war’s end, there would be greater changes still.

Before Texas seceded and war began, the Land Office was a bustling place. It had more employees than any other state agency and its own building,

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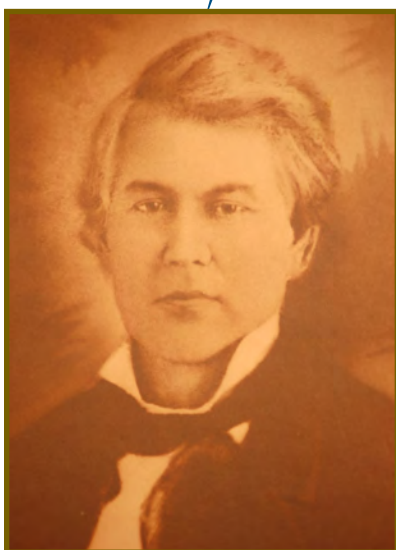
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Commissioner Francis White.

Fisher, and Charles A. Crosby, joined the army in 1861. William C. Walsh, who would later become land commissioner, left for Virginia to fight with Hood's Texas Brigade in Robert E. Lee's army.

Many employees were men older than usual military age, and throughout 1861 and into 1862 the impact of war on the operations of the office was not significant. However, Commissioner White's opposition to secession resulted in the Democratic Party removing him as the nominee in the 1861 elections. Former Commissioner Stephen Crosby, whom White had defeated in 1857, was nominated and elected, heading the office through the remainder of the war.

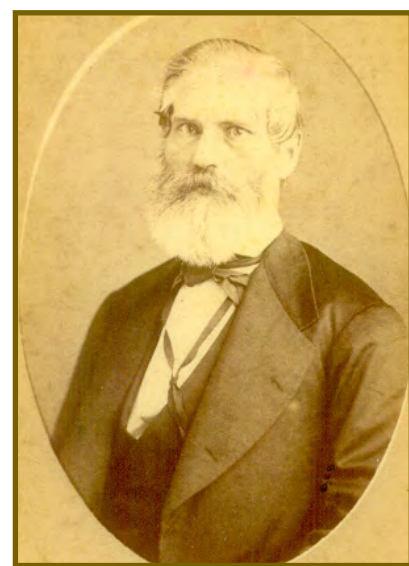
As the war progressed, inflation of Confederate money became an increasing problem. Although the value of Confederate currency continued to fall, the Land Office accepted it for fee payments pursuant to the Legislature's directive.

Making ends meet was difficult for Land Office employees, who were paid in Confederate currency. An assistant clerk earned \$75 per month, a draftsman earned \$83.33 and the chief clerk earned \$116.66. They received no raises for inflation during the war. Land Office draftsman James H. Hutchins left the agency in November 1863, refusing to take his pay in Confederate money. He returned after a few months, perhaps because Confederate money was better than none at all, and his post exempted him from conscription.

On December 16, 1863, the Legislature limited the Land Office staff to "such clerks and draught-

what today is known as the Capitol Visitors Center. Texas Revolution veteran Francis M. "Frank" White led a staff consisting of a chief clerk, a Spanish translator, a receiver taking fees and payments, eight draftsmen, and 20 assistant clerks. Thousands of land patents were issued each year, and according to White's report for 1859, 1860, and the first half of 1861, plans were under way to have maps "made at a cheaper and more rapid rate than by the ordinary process of drawing." Experiments for reproducing maps by photography had already begun.

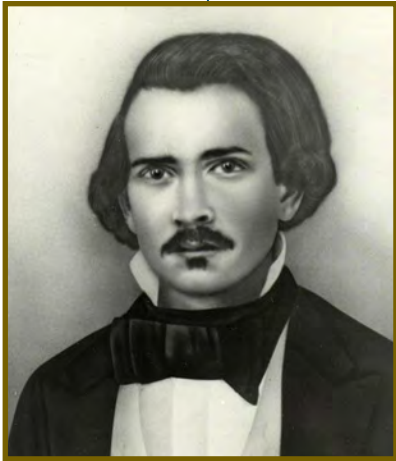
Within a few months of secession, many young men in Austin flocked to the colors as the Confederate Army was formed. Assistant clerks in the Land Office, such as Flavius Everett, Rhoads



William Von Rosenberg, chief draftsman of the GLO and Captain in the Confederate Engineer Bureau. Used with permission from the Von Rosenberg family.

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A young Commissioner Stephen Crosby.

smen only as are or may be necessary to carry on the business of the office.” In 1860, 5,124 patents had been issued, compared to 2,014 in 1863 and 832 in 1864. The number of new maps and sketches decreased from 23 in 1860 to 6 in 1864. Chemical and paper shortages impacted the photographic efforts. The agency still maintained 31 employees in late 1861, but by February 1863, there were only 19, falling to 12 by the end of the year. Eventually, only a chief clerk, one draftsman, and five assistant clerks remained to assist Commissioner Crosby.

While the staff spent most of its time assisting people with surveys, map requests, and patent filings, it was ready to help the war effort through a land grant program to promote wartime manufacturing. An incentive of 320 acres was to be provided for each \$1,000 of investment in “new and efficient machinery” to manufacture items needed for the war. According to a 1972 study of this period, the land grant program resulted in “three cotton and woolen factories, two cotton mills, two iron works, and a (gun) powder company” being put into operation in the last year of the war.

The most important Land Office war contribution was providing officers for the Engineer Bureau of the Confederate Army in Texas. By the 1860s, modern armies needed military engineers to survey roads, rivers and coastlines and prepare detailed maps for armies to use in defense or offense. This was just the sort of thing Land Office surveyors and draftsmen knew how to do. Some were also trained in civil engineering and architecture, skills that could be used in constructing fortifications and bridges for troop movements.

As of October 15, 1863, William Von Rosenberg, Albert Giesecke, and H.R. Von Bieberstein left the Land Office to serve as Assistant Military Engineers in the Confederate Engineer Bureau. Von Rosenberg became a Captain of Engineers, being “chief draftsman in the General Land Office on leave of absence.” Other Land Office draftsmen serving as engineers were Charles Pressler and Oswald Dietz. Pressler was characterized in a December 26 letter as the “best assistant” available to the Engineer Bureau and greatly in demand. Dietz was called “an accomplished and useful officer” and a “valuable man.”

In late 1863 and into 1864, records show these Land Office alumni surveying routes for troop movements and locations for defenses along the Sabine, Colorado, San Antonio, and Brazos rivers. Only Von Rosenberg and Dietz left information about their service.

Both were German; talented draftsmen who emigrated to Texas, and that’s where the similarities ended. Captain Dietz deserted to the enemy in March 1864. An unlikely Confederate to begin with, he was a Socialist revolutionary in 1848 Europe and trusted by Karl Marx. Captain Von Rosenberg, on the other hand, was from a noble German family. “I selected Texas for my future home with full knowledge of the institution of slavery existing here,” he explained. “I came here to live with this people who received the stranger unconditionally, and I felt, right or wrong, my place was with the people of Texas, to stand with them in upholding the cardinal principles of self-government laid down in the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776.”

Von Rosenberg and Dietz were far from the only Land Office employees with skills desperately needed by the Confederacy. They were part of a long tradition of Land Office service in times of war. ✱

Did You Know?

Archival documents and maps can be viewed in a number of different full-color formats online through the Land Grant Database and Online Map Database for free.

Struggles of Texas Women During the Civil War as Seen in the Archives of the General Land Office

by Laurel Atkins

Texas women dealt with fears of death, disease and minié balls¹ just like their husbands, sons and brothers who went off to war. Confederate conscription laws, put into effect in April 1862, required all able-bodied men to enlist in the Confederate States Army, leaving women to tend to the home and cope with changes brought about by a nation divided. Two donated manuscript collections housed at the Texas General Land Office—the Rufus Brooks Mann Civil War Letters² and the Neel Family Papers³—contain wartime correspondence that offers insight into the lives of women during the war.

Mollie and Rufus Mann were married briefly before the latter enlisted in the Confederate Army, leaving for Arkansas shortly afterward. While Rufus was away, Mollie lived in Mt. Vernon, Texas with her newborn son, Wirt, and her mother and sisters. She sent letters regularly, keeping Rufus updated on happenings around Mt. Vernon. Thomas and Willia Neel managed a local post office and a prosperous plantation near Waxahachie when he was chosen to be a delegate at the secession convention. Thomas Neel was soon elected a state senator but died of a sudden illness, leaving the burden of managing the estate on the shoulders of his wife, Willia.



Rufus Mann.

Due to the war, women were suddenly required to handle the finances, civic duties and other obligations that were traditionally handled by men, at a time when rationing and blockades caused supplies to dwindle, and rampant disease and death was the norm. With extreme delays in the postal service, wives were often left to make important decisions on their own.⁴ For example, Willia Neel received a letter from her father shortly after her husband's death, advising her how to manage without her husband. He advised her to hire a foreman to manage the plantation because "with so much responsibility ushered upon [her] all of a sudden, business of such a character to attend to without any experience" would be too much for her to manage on her own.⁵

Mollie Mann was also forced to assume some of the regular duties of her husband, Rufus, a teacher at a local academy. In several letters, Mollie mentioned that she and her sisters had taken on the responsibility of teaching in the local school, just as Rufus had done. They would take turns teaching for several weeks or months at a time so as not to get behind on growing responsibilities at home.



Mollie Mann.

Major shortages of basic necessities were felt almost immediately in Texas due to Union blockades on the Mississippi River and along the Texas coast, which affected everyone, no matter the economic class. Thomas C. Neel advised his wife, Willia, who was visiting family in Georgia, to stock up on provisions. "You had better buy some cotton cards in Georgia, there are none here—all out."⁶

In October 1863, Mollie Mann wrote to her husband that crops were good, however, with the high prices and the large slave population consuming their share, there was little left to benefit the farmer.

At times, the lack of proper nourishment led to sickness and disease, with treatment options being limited, as most medical supplies were rationed for use by the Confederate troops. Because of the lack of proper treatment, an illness like whooping cough or the measles would strike and rapidly spread through the town, from

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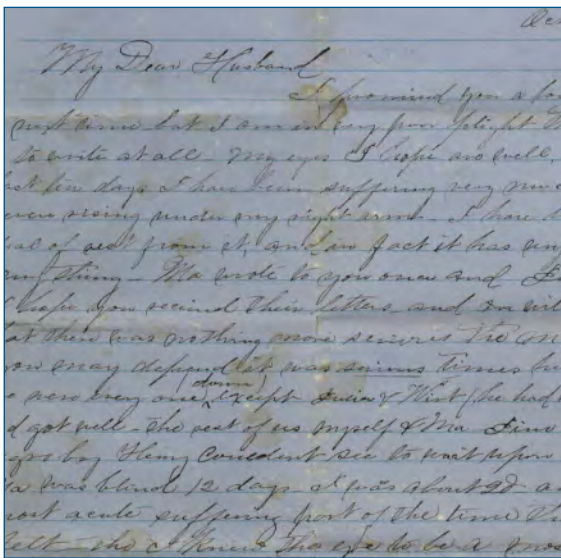
family to family. Mollie Mann described the eye affliction that plagued her family for nearly two months, rendering extreme pain and temporary blindness for weeks at a time:

"I am in very poor plight this morning to write at all. My eyes I hope are well, but for the last ten days I have been suffering very much . . . you may depend it was serious when we were everyone down except Julia and Wirt. The rest of us, myself, and Ma, Jim, and the negro boy, Henry, couldn't see to wait upon ourselves Ma was blind 12 days, I about 20 and the most acute suffering part of the time that I ever felt."⁷

These papers also offer insight on how women helped the war effort in ways that had nothing to do with the everyday struggles of heading up a homestead. For example, Mollie organized a concert for the benefit of the soldiers, which raised \$140 for wounded men returning from war and the families of soldiers still at war. "Our concert for the benefit of the soldiers came off on the 9th well," Mollie wrote.



T.C. Neel letter to Willia Neel, December 12, 1861.



Letter from Mollie Mann to Rufus Mann, October 21, 1863.

As husbands returned from the war and resumed their everyday lives, the women who stepped up to assume duties left empty by these men were not always ready to give up their newfound liberty and social responsibilities. The Civil War brought about a change in gender equality not just in Texas, but throughout the nation, with women commanding a greater presence in community and social affairs than ever before.

The Rufus Brooks Mann Papers were generously donated to the Texas General Land Office by Ray and Doris Moore in 2008. The Neel Family Papers were generously donated by Martha Bonner Miller in 2005.

To learn more about Mollie Mann, Willia Neel, or other Confederate women during the Civil War, or to donate your own Civil War papers, visit the Archives and Records of the Texas General Land Office online at glo.texas.gov, or in person. ✱

Footnotes

- ¹ The Save Texas History Symposium, held September 15, 2012 was entitled The Civil War in Texas: Death, Disease and Minié Balls. It touched upon the difficulties along the home front for all those in Texas, women included.
- ² The Rufus Brooks Mann Civil War letters were generously donated by Ray and Doris Moore in 2008.
- ³ The Neel Family Papers were generously donated by Martha Bonner Miller in 2005.
- ⁴ Angela Boswell, "The Civil War and the Lives of Texas Women," The Fate of Texas, Charles D. Grear, ed. (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 2008), 69.
- ⁵ Letter from J.B. Latimer to Willia Neel, November 23, 1863. NFP 000005, Neel Family Papers. Archives and Records, Texas General Land Office, Austin, Texas.
- ⁶ Letter from T.C. Neel to Willia Neel, December 12, 1861. NFP 000001, Neel Family Papers. Archives and Records, Texas General Land Office, Austin, Texas.
- ⁷ Letter from Mollie Mann to Rufus Mann, October 21, 1863. RBP 000003, Rufus Brooks Mann Papers. Archives and Records, Texas General Land Office, Austin, Texas.

Big Changes for Save Texas History on the Web

by James Harkins and Bob Michaels



The new Save Texas History website was designed to look like the desk of an early land developer, and captures images of objects found at the early GLO.

the lower left corner of the Save Texas History home page. Donations using a credit card or debit card can be accepted online. Cash and checks will also be accepted.

The Save Texas History website has recently undergone some major changes. The new site provides more content, has improved functionality and visual appeal, and makes it easier for the public to help Save Texas History at the General Land Office.

The new website is helping in all aspects of this mission. The maps and documents of the General Land Office Archives are easy to access. TEKS-related lesson plans and study guides are available, as is information about the Texas Travels Essay Contest, the Save Texas History Symposium, and the This Week in Texas History radio program.

It is now easier than ever to give to the Save Texas History program by clicking on the Republic of Texas currency in



Learn about all of the educational programs that are available through the Save Texas History program.

One of the newest features is the tie-in with Facebook, allowing visitors to the Save Texas History website to see who is a friend of Save Texas History on Facebook.

“Social media, like Facebook, is a great tool to interact with like-minded individuals,” Commissioner Patterson said. “It’s tied into everything we do, and it provides one of the best resources to interact with the public. This is a great tool to promote Save Texas History.”

The new Save Texas History website is at savetexashistory.org. ✱

Tell Us About Your Experience at the Land Office Archives

Have you had a good experience with the Texas General Land Office Archives? Maybe you attended a tour or presentation that took your breath away. Or maybe you learned something that you never knew about Texas history. Perhaps you discovered a document that shed some new light on one of your ancestors. The best story about a member of the public’s experience with the General Land Office Archives will appear in the next edition of *Saving Texas History* and will win a free map for the writer! ✱

What We’ve Heard Recently About Teacher Resources

“My presenter’s passion for land in Texas is EPIC!” – Sheri Dewar, Fort Worth ISD

“OMG! This is awesome – I want to know more! The GLO REALLY needs to get this out there!” – Amy Simmons, Cushing ISD

“Everything worked! The GLO is full of applicable information. The work you’re doing is incredibly helpful! Thank you for helping us use primary sources in the classroom!” – Kathy Hill, Coupland ISD.

MAP SPOTLIGHT

Johnson's New Military Map of the United States Showing the Forts, Military Posts & c. with Enlarged Plans of Southern Harbors – 1863

Map #93289

by Alex Chiba

This beautiful map of the United States originally appeared as a two-page plate in *Johnson's New Illustrated Family Atlas*, first published in 1860 by prolific mapmaker, Alvin Jewitt Johnson. During this era, as the railroads were leading the charge of westward expansion and the nation descended into civil war, these atlases were extremely popular. It is thought that A.J. Johnson, in putting together his new atlas, obtained the detailed map plates formerly used by another famous mapmaker, J.H. Colton. Revised editions of the *New Illustrated Family Atlas* were issued almost annually until 1885.



Johnson's New Military Map of the United States Showing the Forts, Military Posts & c. with Enlarged Plans of Southern Harbors.

The map featured here, although bearing a copyright date of 1861, is known to be the second edition of this map and was probably featured in the 1863 or 1864 version of Johnson's atlas. This is evidenced by the way the states and territories in the western part of the United States are represented. Specifically, the Idaho Territory shown on the map was carved out of the Dakota Territory in 1863, while the latter came out of the Nebraska Territory in 1861. Additionally, the first edition of this map as it appeared in Johnson's atlas showed the nation broken up into Military Districts instead of the states and territories shown on this version.

State and territory boundaries, rivers and towns are accurately represented on this map, but because the Civil War was ongoing, Johnson's map also features detailed points indicating the location of military forts and posts. The map shows a large concentration of forts in Texas in particular, with most of the data used to spot these military assets coming directly from the War Department in Washington, D.C. Additionally, 10 "Southern" harbors are featured as insets: New Orleans, Mobile Bay, Pensacola Bay, Key West, Savannah River, Charleston Harbor, Hampton Roads and Norfolk Harbor, Washington and Baltimore. These harbor insets were likely included because of their perceived strategic value during the war.

As is common from atlas maps of this era, this map features an ornately designed border reminiscent of Celtic designs. Johnson's atlas maps were also known for their use of hand coloring to establish and indicate borders, although the color on this particular copy appears only partially completed or has faded over time. Today, only the blue shading appears on the map.

This map is part of the permanent archival collection of the Texas General Land Office with full-size color copies available for just \$20. *

Save Texas History Symposium Offers Insight on Civil War's Effects on Texas

by Jim Suydam

More than 200 Texas history devotees converged on Austin recently for the Third Annual Save Texas History Symposium—The Civil War in Texas: Death, Disease and Minié Balls. Hosted by the General Land Office, the annual event brings together top scholars and history buffs for a full day's worth of lectures, activities and discussions concerning a particular aspect of the state's past.

Among the many topics falling under this year's Civil War theme was Texas' success in fending off Northern aggression, a feat matched by only one other Confederate state. Don Frazier, professor of history at McMurry University and author of several books on the Civil War, offered fascinating details on the state's defense.



Dr. Don Frazier tells the audience about Texas' efforts to defend itself from the Union.



Dr. Richard McCaslin discusses Texas' role in the Civil War.

"Texas never felt the trod of invaders boots, but it wasn't because it wasn't tried," he told a rapt audience. "Each time, Texans were the obstacle, Texans and the vastness of the land." Frazier's presentation revealed the Union's elaborate invasion plans—from the Red River Campaign, to the crossing of the Sabine, to blockading the ports and more.

Ed Cotham, a prize-winning author and Civil War lecturer, gave a lecture on the Union's capture of Galveston—the Battle of the Bay. Cotham brought the battle back to life for the audience, including the dramatic, nighttime assault on Union troops that recaptured the city.

Rick McCaslin, chairman of the University of North Texas' history department, described the bloody clashes over opposition to slavery in Texas, while Robert Maberry, a noted vexillologist and assistant professor at McMurry University, discussed the symbolism of Confederate flags in Texas and their meanings today.

Jerry Thompson, a regents professor of history at Texas A&M International University in Laredo, and Alexander Mendoza, a lecturer at the University of North Texas' history department, had a lively discussion about the trials, tribulations and diverging interests that Tejanos had in the war's outcome.

Among the most moving moments of the entire day was a tour of the Texas State Cemetery, where thousands of statesmen, soldiers, Confederate veterans and others have been laid to rest. Additionally, Civil War re-enactors gave a living demonstration of what camp life was like for Confederate soldiers throughout the day.



Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson looks over a re-enactor's display.

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John Molleston shows off the first draft of the constitution of the Republic of Texas and other documents during a tour of the GLO archives.

Other symposium activities included a tour of the Land Office archives and map vault, which featured several Civil War-era documents, as well as documents from the Texas Revolution and pre-revolutionary time periods. A four-part genealogy workshop was attended by over 70 genealogists and featured speakers who touched upon the resources of the Clayton Library in Houston, the Texas State Genealogical Society, and the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. A workshop for Texas history educators featured presentations from Land Office and Texas State Historical Association staff members. There was also a hands-on demonstration of surveying techniques sponsored by the Texas Society of Professional Surveyors, which led a team of attendees on a survey of the University of Texas.

The symposium is part of the Texas General Land Office Save Texas History™ program, a statewide initiative to rally public support and private funding for the preservation and promotion of more than 35.5 million historic maps and documents, and to help tell the story of Texas history, warts and all.

“I’ve been criticized for being insensitive in the past when talking about the Civil War, or the War Between the States, or whatever you want to call it,” said Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson in his remarks at the symposium. “We have a lot of things to learn from our past. It’s a part of our history that we can learn from, that we shouldn’t be ashamed of, that we shouldn’t be defensive about, and that we can openly discuss, and nobody needs to say, ‘we are insensitive.’ Because we are sensitive. We are very sensitive about the link between the past the present and the future.”

That link is why Save Texas History was created, and why the Save Texas History Symposium is thriving. Thanks to generous donations from the private sector, Save Texas History and the General Land Office are conserving archival materials housed at the agency for future generations, while helping current generations learn about the epic struggles and stories of our ancestors. ✨



Symposium participants went on a tour of the Texas State Cemetery.

Thanks to our Symposium Sponsors



The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The Summerlee Foundation, Texas Society of Professional Surveyors, The Pearce Museum - Navarro College, Texas Council for History Education, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War - Dept. of Texas, Cameron County Historical Commission and Texas State Genealogical Society.

and Symposium Exhibitors

Preservation Texas, TexasTejano.com, Smith Map Studio, Washington-on-the Brazos State Park, The Capitol Visitors Center, Joseph & Susanna Dickinson Hannig Museum, The University of Texas Press, Austin Genealogical Society, Texas Star Books.

Death, Disease and Minié Balls within the Papers of the General Land Office: Life in Texas During the Civil War

Texans during the Civil War experienced many tales of death, disease and Minié balls, as Dudley Ward wrote in a May 23, 1864 letter to his father, former Land Commissioner Thomas William “Peg Leg” Ward. Thousands of these stories, which are centered around the trials and tribulations of Texans serving the Confederate state of Texas, and the widows of those off at war, are found among the 35.5 million documents housed in the General Land Office Archives and Records.

On exhibit now, through the Spring of 2013, are several items from the Confederate Scrip Vouchers, the Dudley Ward Papers and the Rufus Mann Family Papers, all providing different insights into life for men along the warfront and women on the home front.



This exhibit explains the Confederate Scrip Voucher program that existed at the General Land Office from 1881-1883.

The Confederate Scrip Voucher Collection features the stories of men who were maimed, dismembered and killed, along with the stories of their widows, as they applied for land grants more than 15 years after the war.

Also on exhibit are the personal letters of Dudley Ward, who wrote dozens of letters to his father, “Peg Leg” Ward, about his experiences in Galveston and elsewhere on the Texas coast between 1863-1864. Additionally, the papers of Rufus Mann and his wife, Mollie, offer an inspiring look at troubles faced by Confederate women forced into new roles as their husbands went off to war.

For a limited time only, these and other stories of Confederate Texans can be viewed at the Archives and Records of the Texas General Land Office in Austin. Don't miss this rare opportunity. ✨



This exhibit follows the Civil War experiences of Dudley Ward across the Texas coast, through his correspondence with his father.



This exhibit focuses on the hardships on the home front for Mollie Mann.

Do you “like” Texas history?

Love Texas history? Then “like” the new Save Texas History Facebook page! Get the latest news about the Texas General Land Office conservation and education program, including upcoming events, contests, media and Texas history trivia.

Watch for opportunities to win maps and other Save Texas History collectibles. Give STH a thumbs up to be entered in STH drawings. Keep up with your Save Texas History friends today! ✨



To Request a Speaker

to discuss Land Office genealogical resources with your group or society, please call 512.463.5277, or email archives@glo.texas.gov.

To Schedule Tours

please call 512.463.5277, or visit us online at savetexashistory.org.

While anyone who walks in is welcome to tour the Archives, it's best to schedule in advance. With prior notice, tours can be tailored to specific interests. Due to the size of the rooms, groups of 20 or less offer the best tour experience.

A TEXAS HERO'S LAST BATTLE

MARCH 1861 AND A TEXAS HERO'S LAST BATTLE.

This week in Texas History, brought to you by this station and the Save Texas History program of the General Land Office.

March 15, 1861. Austin. Aflame with passion, Texas has voted to secede. Legendary Governor Sam Houston, who opposed secession, must now swear loyalty to the Confederacy or be replaced.

In the mansion, the 70-year-old Houston finishes dinner and retires. Through the night, his wife hears him pace the wooden floors, pondering his fate. By morning he decides.

“Margaret, I will never do it.”

Later at the Capitol, his name is called but Houston refuses to take the oath. The hero of San Jacinto is thrown out of office and branded a traitor. Two years later, he is dead.

Sam Houston fought his last battle 151 years ago,
This Week in Texas History.



HEAR THIS AT THISWEEKINTEXASHISTORY.ORG